[Chaco Period] Terena

From this account it would appear that the Arawak-speaking people in this area were no longer using the large oval-shaped straw-thatched house which is still used by many of the Arawak-speaking people to the north. The covering used may have been made from "piri," a species of bulrush, which the Terena still use for making mats. This type of house was easy to dismantle and move, which may account for the probable abandonment of a more permanent type of structure.

Sánchez Labrador then goes on to describe the inside of the house:

> Each captain lives together with his brothers and their kin in one house. . . . Every house has five doors, in order that no one should get in each other's way. There is one door at each end and three on one side. When it rains, they cover their doorways with mats of rushes. Near the doors are the fireplaces and kitchens, which are no more than three movable stones, which act as a tripod on which they place their curiously worked pots. The food is cooked without any other spices than water. At the back of the house are the beds, that is, mats spread over the floor. It is astonishing that although these people grow cotton they do not use hammocks. [Ibid., vol. 2, p. 276.]

In 1845, when the first groups of the Terena were already near Miranda in Brazil, we get a more definite description of Terena houses from Castelnau:

> In the village there are about 100 to 120 houses, joined to each other. They are long huts forming a circle around a big square. They resemble great "ranchos" covered with immense roofs of palm fronds. [Castelnau, 1850-59, vol. 2, p. 391.]

As to weapons and the interior of the house, Castelnau has this to say:

> The weapons of these people are spears with iron points, clubs, bows, and small arrows, and the "bodoque," an instrument which resembles a bow but has two cords united by a piece of leather in the middle on which stones are placed for shooting. In the inside of each hut there is a bed made of a platform of cane, supported by four stakes, which is covered with a hide of a bull. [Ibid., vol. 2, p. 469.]

The passages just quoted give us a general description of Terena houses. The descriptions are nearly 100 years apart. Sánchez Labrador states that the occupants of the house slept on the floor, while Castelnau states that they slept on skin-covered platforms. The Terena say that they did not use hammocks until recently and that they slept on bamboo platforms, *ipé*, covered with skins or reed mats called *hitúri*.

* [work published in 1850-59, see bibliography, P. 69 -- Analyst]

[Banana] Village]

times rice is also eaten in the form of thin porridge. 000

In addition to these principal crops the Terena produce small quantities of pumpkins, onions, tomatoes, red and green peppers, and garlic. 244

Among fruits, mangoes, oranges, tangerines, lemons, limes, guavas, and pineapples are important. During December and January mangoes are so plentiful in the village that not only people, but horses, cows, hogs, and chickens, eat them. Bananas and plantains also form an important year-round part of Terena diet. Among the bananas that grow well in this region are the "nanica," a small banana called "veia" and the "São Tomé." The plantain, which in Portuguese is called "banana da terra," is used boiled, fried, and dried. 245 [252]

Tobacco.—This crop is grown to some extent. When the plant matures the leaves are picked, rolled, and squeezed in a press to remove moisture, then unrolled and left to dry. This process is repeated several times. When the leaves are finally dry they are rolled into a cord about 1 inch in diameter, the cord being coiled into a compact cylindrical block about 12 inches in diameter and 12 inches high. This tobacco is sold to stores and is retailed by the meter or centimeter. The Terena use this type of tobacco for making cigarettes, dried corn husk being used for rolling. They, however, prefer cheap manufactured cigarettes to the rather heavy, home-grown tobacco. 249 [276]

Cotton.—The Terena still grow cotton, and it is the special privilege of the women to sow the seed. It is planted at the beginning of the rains. The bolls are picked and the seeds are removed by hand. Cotton is spun on a native spindle, consisting of a 2-inch whorl on a stick about a foot long. The Terena still use the traditional loom already described. 248 [462]

THE DAILY ROUND

It is customary for the Terena to arise at dawn. The first person up, whether man or woman, lights a fire at the back of the house and puts a kettle of water on the fire to boil. For awhile the fire builder may fan the fire with a plaited "abanico," or fan. While the water is heating the others get up and all wash their hands and faces either by pouring water into one hand or, more rarely, by washing in a basin. Soap is used when it is available, but towels are rarely used. 512 [372] [515]